

# BIG FINANCIAL INTERESTS ARE BACK OF THE BELL-AUTOMATIC PHONE DEAL

BY N. D. COCHRAN

Whether you now have a phone or not, YOU are interested in the Penny Phone League, for it is fighting the battle for municipal ownership of the automatic telephone system and a phone in every home at a penny a call—and that means YOU.

The Penny Phone League is a voluntary organization of men and women who take an active interest in public affairs and are willing to give freely of their time, energy and ability to help others as well as themselves.

The Penny Phone League is composed of delegates from the following organizations: Chicago Federation of Labor, over 50 labor bodies; Chicago Progressive Club, Women's Civic League, Chicago Progressive Club, Federation of Men's Teachers, Socialist Party of Cook County and Prohibition Central Committee.

Women in all parts of the city are taking an active interest in this organization, because they realize that cheap phone service affects every home in Chicago. They realize that many steps would be saved and much time if phone service were so cheap that everybody could have a phone.

The first important work for the Penny Phone League is to sufficiently arouse public interest to prevent the lobbyists of the phone trust and the tunnel company (owners of the automatic phone system) from railroad-ing a deal through the city council in October, by which the city will consent to the Bell phone trust buying the automatic system and throwing it on the junk pile.

Already the vigorous fight of Alderman Merriam and others for the public interest has prevented this deal going through by securing postponements. But THE LOBBYISTS AND BIG INTERESTS BACK OF THE PHONE TRUST HAVE BEEN BUSY ALL SUMMER, AND THEY WILL TRY TO RUSH THE DEAL THROUGH WHEN COUNCIL MEETS NEXT MONTH.

If they succeed, then good-bye to Chicago's chance to get a municipally-owned phone system unless it buys out the Chicago Telephone Co. To buy out that system would cost the people of Chicago close to FIFTY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

THE TUNNEL COMPANY PROPOSES TO SELL THE AUTOMATIC SYSTEM FOR ABOUT SIX MILLIONS.

A few earnest individuals can't win the great fight for the people unless they have the support of the people generally.

No support can be expected from the newspapers, because the powerful interests back of the Chicago Telephone Co. are big advertisers. The Marshall Field estate is a big owner of Chicago Telephone Co. and American Telephone & Telegraph Co. stock, and Chauncey Keep, trustee under the Marshall Field will, is a director in the Chicago Telephone Co., and John G. Shedd, president of the Marshall Field Co., is a director in the Commonwealth Edison Co.

YOU have seen the persistent advertising of the Chicago Telephone Co., the Commonwealth Edison and People's Gas. Now see how the big money combination works through these corporations and banks and big business.

Not long ago Montague Ferry, Chicago commissioner of public ser-